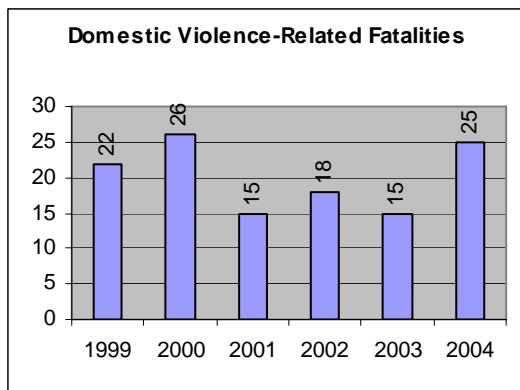


Governor's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board 2005 Report Executive Summary

Domestic violence in its worst, and ultimate, form is homicide. Every year nearly 2,000 people die from domestic violence homicides in the United States, most frequently men causing the death of their female partners.

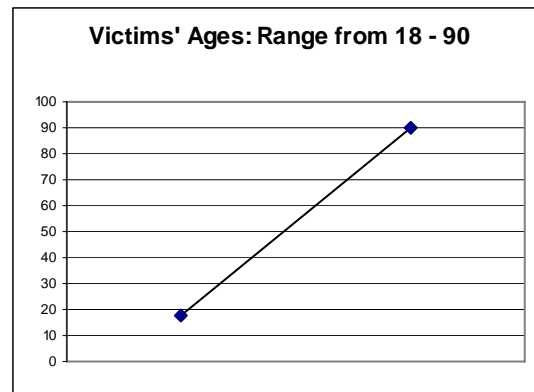
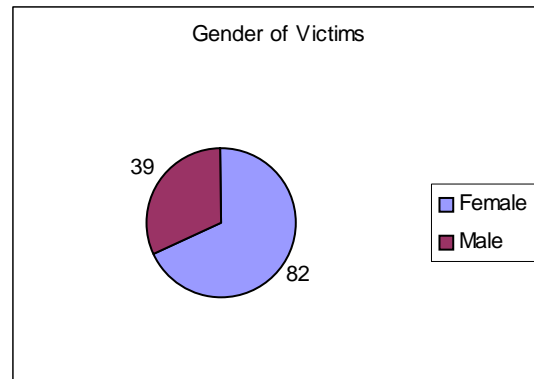
A trend in addressing domestic violence related homicides around the United States and in other countries including England, France and Australia is creating Fatality Review Committees to review domestic violence fatality cases. The theory underlying the fatality review process is that if we are able to understand better why and how a homicide occurred, we can learn important lessons to help prevent future deaths. The core belief underlying the committee's work is that **every death is preventable** and we must work together to make this belief a reality.

According to reports by Kansas law enforcement, 121 adult domestic violence-related fatalities occurred in Kansas from 1999 to 2004.



The 121 fatalities include deaths of spouses, former spouses, persons in intimate relationships whether on-going or in the past and persons 18 years of age or older who are blood- or step-related to one another.

According to law enforcement reports, 15 adult deaths occurred due to domestic violence in Kansas in 2003. The Board reviewed six cases involving nine deaths that were closed and had no further action or appeals pending.

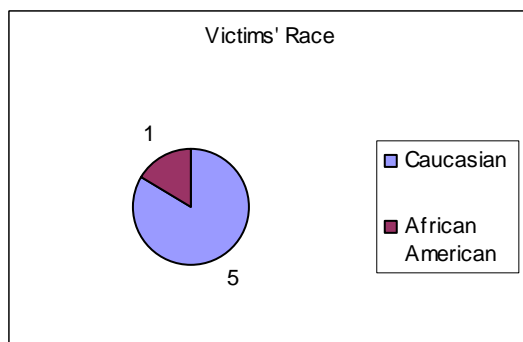
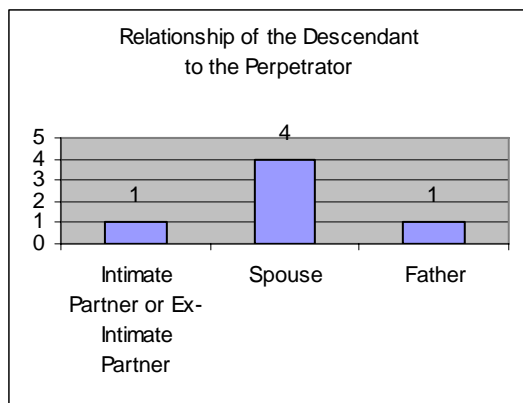
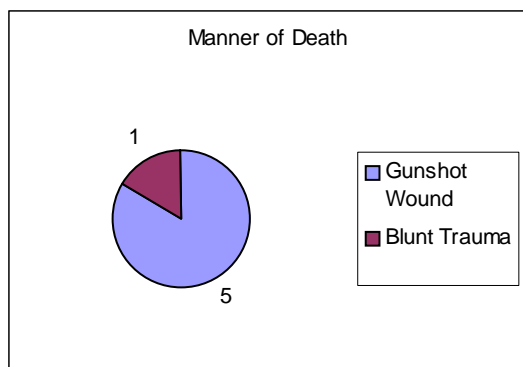


Of those six cases reviewed:

- 6 deaths were homicide/suicides
- 3 cases the perpetrator died
- 1 case was a near fatality when the offender attempted suicide
- 5 deaths were female victims
- 3 offenders are serving time in prison

In 4 of 6 cases, friends, family or coworkers knew of the violence or threats to kill

67 percent (four out of the six cases) of the decedents were attempting to leave their partner



DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

The FRB's definition is "the deliberative process for identification of deaths, including both homicide and suicide, and any other cause related to domestic violence, for examination of systematic interventions into known incidents of domestic violence occurring in the family of the deceased prior to the death, for consideration of altered systematic response to avert future domestic violence deaths, or for development of recommendations for coordinated community prevention and intervention initiatives to eradicate domestic violence."

FRB'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The FRB reviewed and discussed six domestic violence related-fatalities that occurred in Kansas in 2003. Because the number of cases reviewed by the FRB is small, specific findings have not occurred. However, some general themes that the FRB believes are important to address are the following:

- ☞ Increase public awareness initiatives.
- ☞ Develop a systematic manner to track and report criminal data on the relationship of the victim and offender from time of incident to disposition of the criminal case – not just if a domestic violence battery.
- ☞ Train all professionals involved with domestic violence cases – advocates, law enforcement, judges, probation and parole officers, community corrections officers, prosecutors, as well as non-criminal justice professionals such as healthcare providers, educators and school personnel and social workers, etc.
- ☞ Encourage safety and accountability assessments in local communities.
- ☞ Develop an assessment tool to ascertain the level of protection needed for victims seeking protection from abuse and protection from stalking orders.
- ☞ Ensure that third time convicted offenders of domestic violence battery spend time in state correctional facility.
- ☞ Courts should give strong consideration to domestic violence incidents when considering custody issues.
- ☞ All child protective services should assess for domestic violence and should be non-punitive towards the non-abusing parent.
- ☞ Adopt and require standards for working with batterers.
- ☞ Ensure that adequate funds are available for community based domestic violence programs regarding capacity building.
- ☞ Improve the death investigation system in Kansas.

View the report online at www.ksgovernor.org/grants/policies/docs/2005_FRB_Report.pdf.

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